

# Mission News.

A JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS; WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE  
TO THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN BOARD IN JAPAN.

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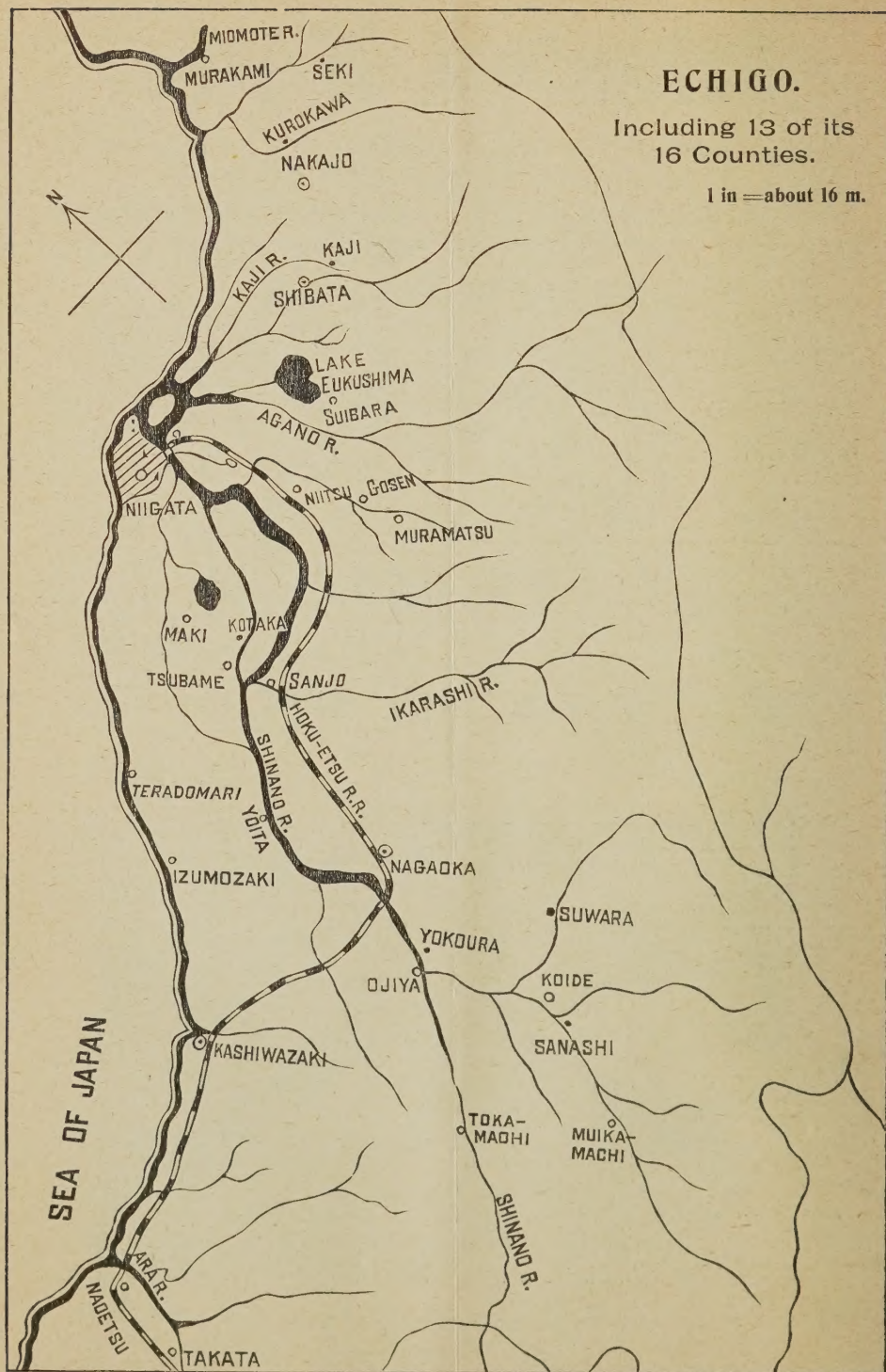


SNOW SCENE NEAR SANASHI  
ECHIGO PROVINCE  
JAPAN.

# ECHIGO.

Including 13 of its  
16 Counties.

1 in = about 16 m.





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For a time we were undecided whether to call this issue of MISSION NEWS a Niigata or Echigo Number but finally chose the former name as meaning more to our readers. Echigo is the name of the entire province of which Niigata is the chief city. The mission work thru-out the province is carried on from Niigata where the missionaries live. Our object has been to give a clear picture of the work of one mission station as it is carried on in an entire province, showing the need of the work with its discouraging, but more especially, encouraging features. So many articles were received that it was impossible to include them all in this issue, tho it is eight pages larger than usual.

## The Province of Echigo.

Just a word about the province of Echigo may help to give the setting for the articles which are to follow.

Echigo is one of the west coast provinces, in area about forty-six thousand sq. miles or approximately the same size as the State of Connecticut. It lies between high mountain ranges and the sea, and is watered by a score of rivers. One of these, the Shinano, which flows into the sea at Niigata, is the largest river in Japan taking its leisurely way north thru the heart of the country and creating a magnificent flood plain. With its tributaries it affords a fine water way thru the interior, and is the

chiefest source of Echigo's wealth. The province has about two hundred miles of sea-coast, and twenty miles away is the large island of Sado, united with it in the same prefecture.

As regards natural resources Echigo is one of the wealthiest provinces in Japan. The fact that it is an oil center will impress itself upon the most careless traveler. You see the oil wells on the hill slopes, the great tanks in the principal cities, and everywhere is the smell of burning petroleum, from the locomotive behind which you ride, to the big refineries along the way. It is this industry which, more than any other, is building up certain large cities. The Standard Oil Company has a large plant managed by several foreigners in Naoetsu.

But the mountains yield far more than oil. They hold an immense wealth of minerals which is only beginning to be exploited. The lumber industry is fairly well developed and great possibilities are open in this direction. It has not yet been found profitable to work the coal discovered in the mountains, owing to the difficulties of transportation. But natural gas is abundant and cheap. A sharp bend of several miles in the Shinano River above Nagaoka is utilized by means of a tunnel to obtain a splendid fall of water, which furnishes electric power enough to give light to the city. This is a sample of the many new industries which are springing up on every hand.

The rivers furnish a most important source of wealth in the fish which swarm in from the sea in spawning time. Along the coast, too, there is much fishing done, and edible seaweeds are collected in great quantities.

But Echigo, thanks to the Shinano, is first of all an agricultural country with the finest rice lands in all Japan. The rice for the Emperor's table comes from the neighborhood of Shibata. In harvest time, as far as the eye can reach, nothing can be seen but the tall hedges of drying grain. There is much fruit raised, too



especially the Japanese pear and the persimmon, also many other products of the soil, from cotton and tea to edible chrysanthemums.

The manufactured products are varied and interesting. Niigata and Murakami are famous for their lacquer; other places are devoted to the manufacture of wine and saké, brick and pottery, matting, cork, and paper; to silk raising, cloth weaving, and the putting up of canned goods.

The winters in Echigo while not severely cold are very damp and disagreeable with heavy falls of snow from the two or three feet at Niigata to the ten feet and more on the level at Nagaoka and the hill towns. At other seasons the sky is often overcast, but on fine days with the great river and majestic mountains on one side, and the blue Sea of Japan on the other, you feel that there are few places on earth lovelier than Niigata.

E. S. COBB.

### Historical Sketch.

#### I.—Some of the Early Christian Work.

The history of Christian work in Echigo begins with the year 1869, the same year that the American Board began work in Japan. In that year Dr. Samuel R. Brown, one of the pioneer missionaries to Japan sent out by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1859, accepted the position of English teacher in the Government School at Niigata.

No direct missionary work could be done in those days, but on every Sunday Dr. Brown held a Bible class in his own house. For this Christian work he was dismissed by the Government at the end of ten months, and a new foreign teacher engaged who was anything but a Christian, and whose evil course in Niigata soon led the Government to bitterly regret the step taken.

In 1875 Dr. Theodore A. Palm, of the Edinburg Medical Mission, came to

Niigata and was the first Christian Missionary to begin active work in Echigo. For eight years he engaged in both medical and evangelistic work, and made a lasting impression for good upon this whole region.

Early in 1883 Dr. Palm made overtures to Dr. Berry of our Mission concerning a transfer of the evangelistic work in this region to the supervision of the American Board. At a special meeting of the Mission, July tenth, a vote was passed approving the removal of Rev. O. H. Gulick and family, Rev. R. H. Davis and family, and Miss Julia Gulick to the proposed new station at Niigata. These plans were submitted to the Board, and on September ninth the cablegram "Resolute" was received from Boston, which resulted in the formal organization of the North Japan Mission of the American Board.

II.—Annals of the Station. (Compiled from station records.)

Mr. and Mrs. O. H. Gulick, Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Davis, and Miss Julia Gulick arrived in Niigata Oct. 11, 1883.

"The missionaries of the Board received a warm welcome from the Christian people, a deputation of whom met them at the custom-house landing. The work was fairly begun on the following Sabbath, in the observance of the Lord's Supper with the resident church members, about thirty in number." (R. H. Davis).

The work thus auspiciously begun was gradually increased until in 1889 Niigata became the second largest station of the Board in Japan, having thirteen members, Kyoto being first with twenty-one. Even this large force was considered inadequate to the needs of the work at that high tide of opportunity for educational and evangelistic work in Echigo.

The first Girls' School in Echigo and the Hoku-etsu College for Boys were opened in 1887 under Christian management. In view of the establishment of these schools the Provincial Government voted in 1888 *not* to open a Middle School in Niigata and to close the exist-



ing one at Yahiko, twenty-two miles distant. Thus these two Christian schools became the only medium for higher education in all this region. Further reinforcements were promised, but before they arrived conditions had changed, the ebb-tide set in, and the Niigata station began to disintegrate.

The intense nationalistic spirit that resulted in more or less of anti-foreign feeling thru-out Japan during the early nineties was especially strong in Echigo. The evangelistic work was crippled and opposition to the Christian schools led to their closing in 1893 for lack of support. Since Miss Brown left in 1904 there has been no representative of the Woman's Board in Niigata and the work for women is carried on by the married ladies of the station with the help of their Bible women.

Rev. and Mrs. W. L. Curtis, who are supported by the First Church of Los Angeles, Cal., and Rev. and Mrs. E. S. Cobb, who are the representatives of the Central Church of Fall River, Mass., now constitute the Niigata Station.

### III.—Other Missions in Echigo.

At different times other Missions have started work in this vast province but almost none of it has been of a permanent character nor continued for more than a few years.

To-day the Presbyterians have Japanese evangelists in Niigata, Murakami, and on the Island of Sado; Japanese workers carried on an Independent Gospel Mission at Nagaoka last year; there are Methodist and Episcopal preaching-places at Takata, superintended by missionaries from Nagano; and the Canadian Episcopal Mission are considering the question of the permanent location of a family at Nagaoka.

The is all of the organized Protestant work in Echigo. The responsibility for the evangelization of the larger part of this great province rests with the American Board Mission and the Kumi-ai Churches.

## The Work in Niigata.

The mission work in the city of Niigata is of two kinds, organized work in chapels and Sunday schools, and the personal work of the missionaries in their homes.

### 1. MISSION CHAPELS.

There are three *kogisho* or chapels named from their location, Shima, Furu-machi, and Gakko Cho, which are quite different from those in many other stations since they are all feeders to one central church, all converts uniting with the Niigata Church. There are flourishing Sunday-schools in each *kogisho* with a total attendance of nearly two hundred.

*Shima*, is on an island in the lower river district, a difficult field but a most needy one. It was opened as a Sunday-school in the early days of mission work in Niigata by some of the ladies of the station, and has always been considered a part of woman's work, being supported by a special grant from the Woman's Board. Under Miss Brown's care it developed into quite an institutional work with a resident evangelist and various societies and classes for women and children, besides the Sunday-school and regular preaching services. The large rented building is well adapted to such work. Saturday evening street-preaching is carried on there during the summer months, but at present there is no resident worker at Shima. Mrs. Curtis, with the assistance of three well-qualified teachers, has charge of the Shima Sunday-school which is exerting a marked influence upon the children of the neighborhood.

*Furumachi* Chapel in the heart of the city and on the principal business street has a splendid location for reaching all classes of people. The special lines of work here are street preaching and tract distribution. Mr. and Mrs. Cobb have the special oversight of this *kogisho*, and members of the Niigata Church often assist in the services. At almost any hour a song by a group of Christian



## WORKERS IN ECHIGO.



MR. UYEDA.

MR. MANABE.

MR. HAMADA.

MR. YONEYAMA.

MR. AND MRS. CURTIS.

MRS. NAKASHIMA.

MISS UYEMURA.

[Mr. and Mrs. Cobb were absent in Tokyo for language study when this picture was taken.]

workers or a few strains of organ music will gather a crowd in front of the chapel to listen. There have been times in the past when the crowd would quickly vanish again, indifferent to the gospel message, or by noisy and sometimes violent demonstration seek to silence the speaker. Yet even in those days some seed fell into good ground. In the many years that this work has been carried on great good has been accomplished and much fruit gathered in. Many young men who are active Christians to-day trace their conversion to an interest aroused by the preaching at Furumachi Chapel. The station is fortunate in having at present a helper who is especially well qualified for this street preaching. His strong voice, earnest manner, and the compelling interest of his message hold large standing audi-

ences attentive to the very end even on cold winter nights.

A Bible store in charge of a Christian family living in the chapel adds to its usefulness as a center for the Christian influence. The large sale of Bibles and hymn books (Japanese and English) during recent years has been very encouraging.

The third chapel is situated on *Gakko Cho* (School Street) not far from the homes of the missionaries. The work here was started four years ago by Mr. and Mrs. Curtis and is similar in character to that at Shima. It has been supported thus far by contributions from personal friends of Mrs. Curtis at her home in Clinton, Wisconsin, and is known to them as "The George Dresser Memorial Chapel." The Sunday-school here is now the largest in the city.



## 2. PERSONAL WORK.

As the American Board Missionaries are the only English speaking foreigners in Niigata there is a great demand for their services in teaching English. Teachers and advanced pupils in the higher schools, employees in the Post Office, policemen, city and *ken* officials, and especially young men about to emigrate to America, are very urgent in their requests for help in English conversation. Such teaching is sometimes a valuable auxiliary to direct evangelistic work and in past years has often been engaged in by the missionaries, but with the present small force of workers and the great pressure of other work, it is simply impossible for the men of the station to do English teaching.

The only concession to this demand for English is the teaching of English Bible classes by Mr. Curtis. Thru the winter months when the usual amount of touring is impossible he has had six weekly Bible classes. On Monday and Tuesday evenings two classes of clerks from the Post and Telegraph Office; Wednesday afternoon a class of Normal School students; and the same evening a class made up of teachers of English in the various city and government schools. This Bible class has continued for several years and has covered a large part of the New Testament. At present it is making a literary study of the Bible, reading selections from the Old Testament. On Friday afternoon there are two classes, one composed of students from the Middle School, and the other a large class from the Commercial School. Results obtained from these Bible classes justify the time and strength given to them. Often the Bible lesson is followed by a little enquiry meeting and a season of earnest prayer. Several of these young men have decided definitely for Christ; others are earnest enquirers. Many of them will become teachers of schools in the province and exert a strong influence for or against Christianity. The future

evangelization of a whole community may largely depend upon decisions reached in some of these Bible classes. In four different villages in the province to-day there are teachers recently baptized who say their conversion was due, in part at least, to instruction received in Bible classes while they were students.

Mr. Cobb has been giving all his time to the study of the language, and to secure the most effective practice in the use of Japanese has avoided all English work thus far. His work has been mainly in preparation for future usefulness, but he has filled the position of organist in both church and *kogisho*, and realizing the important place music has in the church service, has formed classes to teach the tunes in the Union Hymnal which are new to them. His first class was of young men who met in his home, but this year he meets with all the young people of the church for half an hour before the weekly prayer meeting to rehearse a new hymn to be used the following Sunday. Recently too he has begun giving brief talks in prayer meeting, and will deliver his first sermon during the present month.

## The Mothers' Club.

Mrs. Newell founded a society which included the wives of city officials and other prominent women of Niigata. Few of these were Christians, most of them were rather openly opposed to Christianity, but came to the foreigner's house for the practical help they got in things domestic. With the cooking classes and mothers' talks Mrs. Newell introduced tactful presentations of Christian truth which succeeded in very large measure in overcoming prejudice against Christianity, while some few of the women became even mildly interested. The departure of this skilful mistress of the society was a misfortune indeed, and her successor has been able to do scarcely anything more than hold the society together for two years; by



this time the personelle has almost entirely changed, but with even two or three loyal to the founder's purposes, the number of members, about twenty, is recruited from new officials' wives, and there is an earnest attempt made to make the club amount to something.

There are two meetings a month: one is a cooking lesson, and all come to this very readily, taking home in "bento" boxes samples of foreign stuff to tickle the official palates. The second meeting has for its purpose the presentation of some phase of Christianity; but as one of the regulating committee remarked that

if we had nothing but Christianity the women simply would not come at all, we introduce other elements. The last meeting began with a dissertation on the care of infants, continued with a lecture on how to behave at a foreign table, and finished with a real prayer-meeting, the talk given by the teacher of the missionaries. All seemed satisfied that their time had not been unprofitably spent. Even the grain of mustard seed has its coatings, and who shall say those coverings may not be called "domestic science," if they help to protect and plant the seed? FLORENCE B. COBB.



THE NIIGATA CHURCH.

### The Niigata Church.

Probably no part of Japan can furnish climate of a more surprising variety than the province of Echigo. It is noted for its sudden changes, for its extremes of heat and cold, its rare days of glorious sunshine, and its dark days of storm and clouds. Like to this changeable climate has been the past history of the Niigata Church. Periods of prosperity followed by times of depression; prevailing harmony and union spoiled by dissension and division;

enthusiastic forward movements under able leadership, then loss of leader and discouraging retreat or inaction. Probably no church in Japan has had so many pastorless years in its history; for one third of the time since its organization in 1886 the Niigata Church has been without any regular supply, and for more than one-half of the time it has been looking for a pastor.

The period of greatest prosperity extended from 1887 to 1893. Then the church was crowded every Sunday with students from the two Christian schools.



Nearly every Communion season saw large additions to the church (seventy-four in 1888). There was a total membership of two hundred in 1891. During a part of this time the church was not only self-sustaining, but was also responsible for a great deal of evangelistic work in the province, giving freely for this cause, opening *kogisho* in neighboring towns and villages, and sending out student evangelists to preach the gospel. Then came the great blow to the church from which it has never fully recovered. In 1893 the Christian schools were closed for lack of funds to carry them on, the student members left Niigata, audiences dwindled, Pastor Hori resigned, and finally, thru internal dissensions, the church was split in twain. A part of the members withdrew in February 1894 and established an independent church which has continued to hold regular services, tho without a pastor except for the first few months.

During the next decade the Niigata Church was obliged to ask for financial aid from the Mission. Several brave attempts at self-support ended in more complete dependence upon the Mission. For two years during this period Mr. Newell was the Acting Pastor of the church. In 1903 there was a decided rally when under the brief pastorate of Mr. Teraoka the church became financially independent. But again internal dissensions and the removal or withdrawal of prominent members greatly reduced the strength of the church numerically, financially, and spiritually.

Since December 1903 (except for the fall and winter of 1905) the church has been without a pastor. Yet thru all of these discouraging times there has always been a faithful remnant whose prayers and earnest efforts have kept the church alive. During the last few years regular church services, Sunday-school, and prayer-meeting, have been sustained, the deacons and one of the missionaries occupying the pulpit in turn. Nor has the work of these pastorless years been entirely unfruitful. Especially of late

there have been an encouraging number of additions to the church on confession of faith.

The Week of Prayer at the beginning of the present year was observed with a series of excellent meetings in which the three churches in Niigata united. There was an earnest spirit of prayer manifest, a great longing for a genuine revival in these Niigata churches that should spread thru all the province. Ever since the Week of Prayer there has been a steadily rising tide of interest in all of the church services, and never before in the weekly prayer-meeting have I seen a more earnest spirit of supplication or a more general expectation of a great spiritual blessing.

The interest that the *Sokwai* (General Conference) manifested in the Echigo field, and the efforts of the Tokyo brethren to find a pastor for the Niigata Church aroused expectations that were bitterly disappointed when the negotiations for the immediate securing of a pastor failed. But the new spiritual life in the church enabled the people to meet the disappointment bravely and to determine to do their best, even without a pastor, to prepare for the coming *Shu-chu Dendo* (Special Evangelistic) Meetings and the Y.M.C.A. Rally to be held here this spring. We believe that these meetings will result in great blessing to Niigata and be the beginning of a new era of growth and prosperity in the history of the Niigata Church.

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Often those who are not Christians help to sow the good seed. Some of the teachers in the Niigata Schools present their pupils with Sunday-school cards bearing Scripture texts as rewards of merit.

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A Young Men's Christian Association has recently been organized at Shibata. All of our out-stations are now supplied with these valuable auxiliaries to the work of the church.



## A Breach in the Walls.

One of Echigo's numerous strongholds in feudal days was the walled town of Sanjo on the Shinano River between Niigata and Nagaoka. Its walls have vanished and only in the name of one of its suburbs, *Ichi-no-ki-do*, (First Wooden Gate) is there now any reminder of the ancient fortress.

Nevertheless Sanjo is still a walled town,—the stronghold of Buddhism in this province, and the site of a large, newly built branch-temple of the famous Higashi Hongwanji of Kyoto. With triple walls of bigotry, superstition, and prejudice the people of Sanjo have tried to prevent the entrance of Christian truth.

At one time we had an evangelist stationed at Sanjo, and there was an earnest group of Christians mostly of the official class. Death and official rotation removed them all and the place was abandoned as an out-station some seven or eight years ago. Recent attempts to open work in Sanjo have failed. Last year a missionary of another denomination and his helper were refused lodging at every hotel in the city and were obliged to leave by the evening train without holding the series of meetings they had planned. Later in the year a Japanese Bible-woman had the same experience. These incidents show something of the quality of the opposition to be encountered in Sanjo. I know of no other town in the Empire that would refuse lodging for a night to Japanese or foreigner simply because he was a Christian.

Last month I unexpectedly obtained entrance to this stronghold of opposition to Christianity through the old gate-way of *Ichinokido*! As so often in other places the desire for the study of English under a foreigner was the key that unlocked the door. A young man living near Ichinokido station came to me in Niigata with the familiar request that I teach him English.

I explained that I could not spare time for the teaching of English only,

but gave him permission to enter one of my English Bible classes for Niigata students. He then asked if it would not be possible for me to teach a class at Sanjo at least once a month. Seeing in this request a possible opening for further evangelistic work in that city I told him if he would organize a class for Bible study I would teach it, stopping off for that purpose between trains when my touring led me to pass thru Sanjo.

On my first visit when I stepped from the train at Ichinokido I was met by ten young men, for the most part students of the Sanjo Middle School. At the home of one of their number we spent more than an hour in Bible study using alternately the Japanese and English texts with which they had provided themselves from our Niigata Bible store. That these young men desired religious instruction as well as help in their study of English was evident from their questions, and from the fact that they preferred explanations in Japanese, and of their own accord requested that I close the lesson with prayer.

I was given a good supper and cordially invited to spend the night, so even tho hotel doors may be closed against me a place of entertainment in Sanjo has been providentially provided. That night however it was necessary that I go on to Nagaoka and I was again accompanied to the station by the whole class. Instead of giving the usual presents that burden one with a sense of obligation, these young men showed a pleasing tact and courtesy in handing me some money enclosed in an envelope which was inscribed,—“*For the work of the Niigata Church, from the Sanjo Young Men's Bible Class.*” W. L. CURTIS.

The Presbyterian Church of Niigata has leased for ten years a corner of the Y. M. C. A. lot on which they are building a new church to be completed in May. This will not interfere with the erection of a Y. M. C. A. Hall on the same lot when the time for such a building comes.



## Out-stations.

There are now but three places outside of Niigata where we have evangelists under the employ of the Mission, viz., Shibata, Nagaoka, and Kashiwazaki. But from the very beginning of the Mission's work in Echigo until January of last year Nakajo, a town of more than four thousand inhabitants, thirty miles north-east of Niigata, was one of our most important out-stations. Having now been passed over to the care of the Japan Home Missionary Society, we no longer report it as a part of our work, but we still respond to calls for the administering of the Communion or the baptizing of converts, and occasionally accompany the Nakajo evangelist on a tour thru that region. The Nakajo Church dates from the time of Dr. Palm's work in Echigo, and was the first organized church in the province. Like the Niigata Church, it has had a checkered career; there have been times of great activity and long periods of repose, repose so profound that more than once it seemed the sleep of death.

When Mr. Higuchi began work there in 1900 there was at first many a Sunday when his wife was the only person in the audience! But before he left Nakajo in 1904 to take up a larger work in Hawaii, where so many Echigo people have gone, he had awakened the sleeping church to new life, and had exerted a lasting influence for good upon the whole community. In Mr. Hamada, the present evangelist, we found a worthy successor to Mr. Higuchi; stimulated by his earnest preaching and his self-sacrificing labors, the Nakajo Church has made steady progress. Instead of the diminutive chapel that for a quarter of a century served as meeting-house, they have now a commodious building, church and parsonage in one, that is well adapted to the needs of the work. This new church home was dedicated last April.

Mr. Hamada holds services at Kujo-

kawa, some two miles from Nakajo, and at Seki, fourteen miles distant. The work at Seki is especially interesting. In December last I visited this place and found a group of seven or eight earnest enquirers who will soon be ready to receive baptism.

*Shibata.*—This large garrison town is a strategic center for evangelistic work in the northern part of our field. In its long history as an out-station, the period covered by Evangelist Hara's labors (1887-1893) was the most prosperous. The records show the names of sixty-five members added during those seven fruitful years. Then followed seven years of famine! By removal to other places, by dismission to other churches, and by death, spiritual or physical, the number of Christians was reduced to a mere handful. But last year this little group of believers determined to rise and build them a house of worship, for it was felt that one great hindrance to growth was the lack of a church building. It was a great undertaking, but they were strong in the faith that it could be done, and they proved their faith by their works. With courageous self-sacrifice they gave freely and worked hard to raise the necessary funds. With the grant of one hundred *yen* from the Mission's Church Building Association, and some extra help from former and present workers in the Niigata field (both Japanese and foreign) they succeeded in purchasing the land and a building which was enlarged and remodeled into a convenient church edifice well suited to the needs of the community.

November 3, 1906 (the Emperor's birthday) was truly a red-letter day to the Shibata Christians, for on that day they dedicated their new building free from debt. Dr. Petee, who was making a tour of Echigo at that time, preached the dedicatory sermon. All of the workers in the field were present and shared in the joy of the occasion, and assisted in the special preaching services that followed. Many letters and telegrams of congratulation from former



members and workers were read. One from the sick-bed of Evangelist Hara, accompanied by a gift of five *yen*, was especially appreciated and called forth tender reminiscences of those years of faithful toil in which he practically gave his life for this work.

The new building has already proved a great help to the work at Shibata. Increased audiences and one of the largest Sunday-schools in the province, are a direct result. The lot that was purchased is large enough to allow the building of an addition to the church, which would provide a parsonage, a prayer-meeting room, and when necessary an enlargement of the audience room. Such an addition is already a pressing need.

*Nagaoka*, the second city of the province in size, in material wealth, and in educational advantages, is situated on the railway and at the head of navigation on the Shinano River. It is the geographical center of the oil producing region, and having unusual transportation facilities, and an abundant supply of natural gas and electric power, it is destined to become an important manufacturing center. Within a radius of thirty miles are scores of towns and villages, which makes *Nagaoka* our most important out-station and turing center. The people of *Nagaoka* are exceedingly conservative. The Buddhist element is strong and at times considerable opposition to Christianity has developed; hence the growth of our work here has been slow.

Rev. O. H. Gulick, in the Annual Report for 1884, speaking of the removal of five Christians from *Niigata* to *Nagaoka*, says: "Only those who have struggled long to gain the first foothold in an obdurate heathen city, can fully appreciate the value we place upon the entrance of the first half a dozen Christians into this flourishing, proud place. Continuous seed sowing on the part of the laborers seems now to be the only requisite for insuring a future harvest."

This "continuous seed sowing" has been well done by many faithful sowers. Mr. Yoneyama, the present evangelist, will complete ten years of service in the *Nagaoka* field in June, 1908. He is now beginning to see the fruit of his labors. He has won the respect of the people and is a recognized power for good in the community. This influence is felt thru a large number of neighbouring towns and villages that he has visited. Mr. Yoneyama says: "Last year was the most successful evangelistic experience of my life."

Largely attended preaching services; a Sunday-school that fills to overflowing the little chapel; a flourishing Y.M.C.A. from whose membership come many additions to the church; many new villages opened to the gospel during the past year; three new Sunday-schools held in village school-houses and taught by the principals of those schools! Best of all many earnest enquirers and thirty-one baptisms during 1906. Such is the record in part of what has recently been accomplished. The prospect for the coming year is even more hopeful.

*Kashiwazaki*.—In early days a sleepy fishing village, now a busy, wide awake, growing town of more than ten thousand inhabitants. Its new name, the "Oil City" of Echigo, explains its sudden prosperity. Before the coming of the railroad and the oil refineries, *Kashiwazaki* became an out-station of the *Niigata* mission work. In 1890 Mr. Manabe, now of Shibata, began working here as evangelist. It was a difficult field and but little progress was made for many years. At the end of ten years there were about ten resident Christians. There are still less than a dozen members, but conditions have changed and the Christian chapel, well located on the main business street, is making its presence felt as a power for good in the community. The evangelist, Mr. Uyeda, is meeting with much encouragement. Especially helpful in removing prejudice and gaining a hearing for Christianity has been his frequent articles in the daily press; the

Kashiwazaki papers freely open their columns to anything he wishes to contribute. This form of imparting Christian truth has doubtless been more effective among the educated classes than the public preaching of the Word. Yet it is also true that in no other place in the province can larger or more attentive audiences be gathered at special Christian meetings than here in Kashiwazaki. The Superintendent of the Japan Oil Company's refinery at Kashiwazaki, Mr. S. Takano, was one of the early graduates of the Christian School at Niigata. His personal influence and public addresses are a great help to our church in Kashiwazaki, of which he is a member. Mr. K. Ito, the Japanese manager of the Standard Oil Company's refinery at Naoetsu, is also one of our Kumi-ai Christians. He contributes to our Kashiwazaki work and pays the expenses of Mr. Uyeda's monthly trip to Naoetsu, where two meetings are held in his house. Mr. Ito is an earnest temperance advocate and has done much for this cause in Naoetsu and at Kashiwazaki by organizing Temperance Societies.

WILLIAM L. CURTIS.

### Touring in Echigo.

When I first went to Echigo, the whole country north of Naoetsu was without a railroad. Fortunately however *jirikisha* were cheap and plenty of them. Marvelous tales are told of the long distances covered by famous runners, one man in particular having to his record the entire distance between Naoetsu and Nagaoka—fifty-three miles, in nine hours. Then there were the river boats plying between Nagaoka and Niigata—forty-five miles, the down trip taking six, and the up trip nine hours, the time being very much extended in say seven days out of six! There were other waterways also with other and smaller and meaner boats. The Kuzuzuka flyer that with the help of poles could make

from three miles an hour up; the Kameda express that made good time when the water was high and the bridges not too low; and last of all the famous Watatsu Maru that ambled along between Naoetsu and Niigata, and furnished more misery to the square inch for the passengers, than almost any other instrument of man's invention.

Besides the boats and *jirikisha*, there were sleds in winter, later on, bicycles in summer, and all the time there was the privilege of walking, either in shoes, rubber boots, or sandals.

I have availed myself of all of these, and it is hard to say which is best. Each has its compensations to the man who has entered into the spirit of touring.

It was on these trips that I picked up a great deal of the language at my disposal now. 'Twas no easy task in the early days, to squat for hours on one's haunches, surrounded by a confused jargon of sounds that were well-nigh meaningless. But each succeeding trip was easier than the one before, and a backward look at this time causes one to reflect that the aching head, cramped limbs, and general weariness were simply the current prices to pay for a partial solution of that riddle of riddles—the Japanese Language.

But the best thing about such trips was the opportunity to touch closely the life and thought and manners of the people that at first seemed so strange. The value of kindness, sympathy, and straightforward dealing became increasingly apparent, as the sorrows, perplexities, and sins of each community came into view.

Eleven years in Echigo have left the impression of a great country, with a teeming population of more than ordinary possibilities. The women are said to be fairer than most of their sisters elsewhere, and therefore naturally fitted to enrich the home rather than the brothel, to which too many of them go. The men are patient, long-suffering, and industrious. Their sons are well to the front among those who emigrate to other lands, and send their hard-earned savings to swell the home fund. The land is



rich and most of it easy of cultivation. The great lack is the knowledge of God and his Son Jesus Christ. When that knowledge shall have taken possession of this people, the Gospel will have a new opportunity of showing its power and its glory.

We join with our fellow workers in Niigata in the prayer that a suitable pastor may be found for the church there; that additional men for out-stations may be found; and above all that the spirit of life and love and power may be poured out in abundant measure upon all who, throughout the Province, either have believed in or are seeking to believe in God.

H. PEDLEY.

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Missionaries do not often require the services of policemen but it is pleasant to know that in many places in Echigo the touring missionary is sure to be cordially greeted by local police officers eager to do him a favor. This friendly attitude of the police shows their appreciation of what the missionaries did for them while they were in the Niigata Police Training School. Mr. Pedley was for a time a regular teacher of English in this school. Mrs. Newell later had large classes of policemen in English and Bible study. Mr. Curtis had a number of policemen in one of his Bible classes during the fall and early winter, but they have now been assigned to duty in various parts of the province.

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### "Darkest Echigo."

In two respects Echigo has a most unenviable reputation throughout Japan. Its climate is popularly supposed to be extremely disagreeable, and the moral standards of its people exceedingly low.

We who have spent years in the province would not draw so dark a picture of its climate as do those who speak only from hearsay or from the briefest of experience; but the moral

darkness of Echigo is only too plainly evident.

It is well known that the phrase "Echigo women" is a by-word in the land. Yet the fact that they are sold in great numbers to supply the brothels of Tokyo, and are found living a life of shame in nearly every city of Japan, and in the coast cities of Siberia, Korea, and China, is not so much a reflection upon the character of the women of Echigo as upon that of the men who take pride in their country's shame and for pecuniary profit encourage this horrible traffic.

Police records show that procurers from Tokyo bought in one year 804 girls from Niigata city, and from the whole province 5,628 girls for the sum of 742,111 *yen*. In Echigo girl-babies are more welcome than elsewhere in Japan on account of the high prices they will bring. The life of a *geisha* and even that of a prostitute is held up as an ideal in many families among the lower classes. "If you are not good we will not let you be a *geisha*" is a common threat of these parents to their little girls.

Echigo was exceedingly slow in providing for the higher education of women. There were no high schools for girls until about eight years ago. Now there are five in the province and all are crowded with pupils. With higher education for women there will come higher ideals of womanhood that will gradually permeate all classes. But the greater need is for *Christian* ideals of true manhood and womanhood, of personal purity, of the sanctity of marriage, and of parental responsibility for the right training of children. Christian homes will do more than high schools to save the women of Echigo, and the light of the gospel more than the light of knowledge to dispel the dark cloud that now hangs over this province.

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## Work for Women in Echigo.

Woman's work for women in Echigo may be divided into three classes, viz.:

I.—Work centering in the missionaries' homes.

II.—Organized work in Niigata.

III.—Touring or work for women in the out-stations.

I.—Besides various English classes and a large class of music pupils, there are four societies which meet regularly each week at the writer's home.

The first is a society of King's Daughters, organized five years ago, now numbering twenty members. From this society eleven young women have already received baptism and united with the church. A nucleus of earnest Christian girls, and a library of Christian books, have done more, aside from the Spirit of God, in leading these girls to Christ than any other means. A prayer meeting is held each week and a C. E. consecration meeting once a month. Once every month too, these girls attend the *fujin-kwai* or Woman's meeting.

The second society is a Sunshine Band of fifteen girls, organized four years ago.

These girls are now nearly all in the High School. Within the last year they have begun to lead their own meetings, taking part in prayer, and a large number of them are now Christians. Christian books are read to them, chapter by chapter, by my Bible woman at each meeting.

The third society is called the Pure Heart Society, organized last year with a membership of over twenty little girls. A lesson in crocheting is the special attraction, but the last half of the meeting is opened with devotional exercises, and interesting Christian stories are read to them.

All these societies draw the girls into Sunday-school, and the oldest society into church attendance and church membership. Mite boxes in all of these societies are opened at Christmas time, and the contents spent for some benevolent object.

II.—The first regular Woman's Society in Niigata was organized about twelve years ago by Miss Clara Brown, now Mrs. Nagasaka, altho frequent meetings for women had been held for many years previous. The present *Fu-*



THE SUNSHINE SOCIETY.



*fujinkwai* is a union society of the three Niigata churches, and meetings are held regularly once a month, from house to house, opening with devotional exercises, followed by a Christian talk, and later a social hour. The membership is over thirty, the attendance good. A small monthly membership fee provides refreshments for each meeting, and the balance on hand at the end of the year is given to some benevolent object.

A Mothers' Meeting was started by Mrs. Newell four years ago, and is now carried on by Mrs. Cobb. Besides this work, much calling is done both by the missionaries and the three Bible women, one of whom gives all her afternoons to this work.

The three Mission Sunday-schools in Niigata may rightly be included in woman's work. The Bible women and two of our King's Daughters are helping us in this work. The attendance and general order in these Sunday-schools was never better than now; two of them are located in the poorest parts of the city and reach the most needy class of children.

There is one very interesting line of work carried on here in the city by one of the Christian women, viz., a night-school for poor girls. This woman began the work three years ago, opening her own house for the school, and she herself teaches sewing. Two school-teachers give their services one evening each week, teaching the girls reading and arithmetic, and the missionary and her Bible woman have gone one evening a week for teaching crocheting, a Bible lesson, and the singing of Christian hymns. The attendance has averaged about twenty-five, but recently the school has increased in size, a larger house has been rented, and efforts made to raise funds by securing sustaining members at ten *sen* a month. The ages of the girls range from ten to twenty years; all work thru the day, many being employed in a match factory. We believe this to be one of the best means for solving the terrible problem before us in Echigo,-

how to save poor girls from a life of shame.

III.—Visiting the four out-stations for the purpose of holding meetings for women was done for many years by Miss Cozad, Miss Clara Brown, and Miss Swartz. Two tours a year were made, one in the fall and the other in the spring. In the early days these meetings were often small and the work discouraging, it was so hard to get the women to come out to any meeting. Four years ago the evangelist in Kashiwazaki invited Mrs. Newell and her Bible woman to open a monthly *fujinkwai* there, which from the first proved a successful. On Mrs. Newell's removal to Matsuyama three years ago, the writer was requested to take up this work, which she did with the help of a Bible woman. On our first trip we stopped off at Nagaoka for a meeting with the Christian women, which resulted in an invitation to begin a monthly *fujinkwai* there also. These meetings, small at first, have grown steadily in numbers and interest. At Kashiwazaki we often have thirty or more in attendance. The great need at the beginning was for organs, hymn books, Bibles, and a library of Christian books. All these needs have been supplied. A year later a monthly *fujinkwai* was opened in Shibata, the missionary and her Bible woman going regularly except thru the winter months when the snow makes the roads impassible. Twice a year these trips are extended to Nakajo, where large and enthusiastic meetings have been held, chiefly due to the very efficient work of the pastor's wife, who has hitherto held woman's meetings there at irregular intervals, but now feels the time has come for regular organized work in Nakajo.

In each of those four out-stations flourishing Sunday-schools are carried on, in Kashiwazaki and Shibata largely thru the efforts of our Christian women. One of the most encouraging things we have met with in the work is the very earnest spirit with which the Christian

women in the out-stations labor for the growth and success of their woman's meetings.

The Woman's Union Day of Prayer in May is observed each year here in Niigata. For the past two years delegates have come from all of our out-stations. Last year ten of them came for the all-day meeting, which was largely attended by Presbyterian and Kumi-ai Christians. The morning was given up to a prayer meeting, and an address by the Presbyterian pastor; the afternoon to reports from the various women's societies. These meetings are a great help in our work, deepening and broadening the spiritual life of the women.

GERTRUDE B. CURTIS.

### The Story of Sanashi.

The story of Sanashi is the story of Tetsuji Sakurai, who for many years has been the school teacher at Sanashi, a village of one hundred and forty houses in North Uonuma county, about thirty miles from Nagaoka. He first came into contact with Christianity at Niigata while studying in the Hoku-shin Gakko, a private school in which Mr. Newell was teaching at that time. He began the study of the English Bible for the sake of the language, but with an avowed opposition to its teaching; nevertheless it was the reading of that Bible in after years more than anything else that finally brought him to believe in Christ. I have seen that old English Bible, and by the marking of its pages one can almost trace the progress of his faith.

In the fall of 1905 he came to Nagaoka and received baptism, returning immediately to Sanashi, where he is related by blood or marriage ties to half of the village, and as principal of the school commands the profound respect of the whole community. His position gave him a unique opportunity for influencing the people, and he at once began to teach

them of God the Father. It is often very difficult for a Japanese Christian to speak to his near relatives on the subject of religion. The circumstances relating to the conversion of Mr. Sakurai's wife seem to indicate a special leading of the Holy Spirit.

According to village school custom Mr. Sakurai lives alone at the school-house, and so is seldom at home except on Sundays and holidays; his little children, however, are continually running back and forth between the home and school. One day the mother overheard their seven year old boy use the expression, "*Ten no Chichi*" (The Father in Heaven), and asked him what he meant by it and where he had learned the phrase. He replied, "Oh, Papa often speaks of the Heavenly Father and talks to Him too." The mother, whose heart had been prepared by the chance reading of *Ichijiku*, a Christian novel, sat down and wrote a letter to her husband telling him she wished to know more about the Father in Heaven, and asked him to teach her.

Last June I made my first visit to Sanashi in response to Mr. Sakurai's request that I come and baptize his wife and children and a young man of the village whom he had been instrumental in leading to Christ. I was entertained at Mr. Sakurai's home and found there an exceedingly interesting family. Besides Mr. Sakurai, his wife and four children, there were his father and mother, and his grandfather and grandmother, four generations living together in the home that had belonged to the family for three hundred years. When I paid my respects to the great-grandfather of the children, he greeted me cordially and then naively remarked, "When I was young they used to cut off the heads of foreigners or drive them from the country, and now I am entertaining one under my own roof! How the times have changed!"

I was the first foreigner ever seen in Sanashi and was most kindly treated by everyone. Three wonderful meetings we



had that afternoon and evening. The first was the baptismal service, when like a dutiful son Mr. Sakurai first asked and received the formal consent of his father to the baptism of his little children. Then came the first celebration of the Lord's Supper in Sanashi, followed later in the evening by a preaching service at which twenty-five of the friends and neighbors were gathered.

When I went again in September there were eight baptisms including Mr. Sakurai's brother and his family. One hundred people gathered on this occasion for the preaching service, and after listening quietly to two long sermons, many stayed on for another hour to ask questions that showed how deeply their interest had been aroused.

Again in November we took Dr. Pettee to see this interesting work, and he baptized another family, father, mother, and child, the mother being a sister of Mrs. Sakurai. And so by individuals and by families the people of Sanashi are being saved, largely thru the example and influence of the school teacher, Tetsuji Sakurai. His father is now earnestly studying the Bible and even the old grandfather has expressed his desire for a Christian funeral when he dies—a difficult decision to make for one who has been a Buddhist for more than eighty years.

The Christians at Sanashi have started a Sunday-school for their children and meet together every Sunday night for prayer and study of the Bible. For the sake of reaching as many of the people as possible, their meetings are held at opposite ends of the village on alternate Sundays. Mr. Yoneyama, the Nagaoka evangelist, visits them once a month when the roads are open.

Sanashi is now cut off from the outside world, buried under the winter snows that fall in that mountain valley to the depth of twenty feet, and last for six months of the year. But when June comes round again and we are permitted to visit them once more, we expect to find still others ready to receive Christian baptism, for

this is but the first chapter of the story of Sanashi.

W. L. CURTIS.

### Seed Time and Harvest.

In the fields of Japan where two and sometimes three or four crops are produced in a year, we often see seeding and harvesting going on at the same time. On missionary fields it is always seed time, and at the present time in Japan, thank God, it is always harvest.

This is especially true of Echigo. We are reaping to-day where we have not sown. For more than thirty years "other men have labored" here and now we have "entered into their labors." As we "lift up our eyes and look on the fields white to the harvest," our hearts are filled with both joy and trembling—joy at the prospect, but fear lest for lack of workers the harvest be not fully gathered in. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." Oh, so few!

For the gathering of the harvest in Echigo, one of the greatest evangelistic fields in our mission, there are but the two families at Niigata, four evangelists, and three Bible women, a force utterly inadequate to the needs of the field. If we should include all of the Protestant workers of all denominations, Japanese and foreign, men and women, there would still be but one Christian worker for every 100,000 souls in Echigo. There are not laborers enough to reap the harvest fields, that is, the places where work is now being successfully carried on. Still more are needed for plowing and seed sowing. There are vast fields of virgin ground in Echigo where as yet no seed has been sown. Half of the counties of the province have not yet been entered. There are many fields once occupied that for lack of workers have for years been lying fallow.

This is one of the sad features of our work here in Echigo. Not only has the mission force been greatly reduced, but

re-trenchment has driven workers from the field and lack of necessary funds prevents us from calling more. This accounts for the large amount of fallow ground. A dozen towns ranging from one thousand to five thousand in population which were once occupied as out-stations or as places regularly visited, have now for a long time been unvisited. Some of these fields have lain so long fallow that briers and thistles cover the ground, and there is no sign of fruitfulness. In others fertile spots remain that would quickly respond to cultivation. There are individuals or little groups of Christians in some of these abandoned fields who are calling for help. That some have died a spiritual death is not strange. That so many have kept alive their faith under such discouraging circumstances is a cause for thankfulness. How to reach them and help them is one of our great problems.

*Gosen* was once a most hopeful out-station with a preaching-place, a resident evangelist, and more than thirty members. Now for several years the little handful of Christians there have had no services, and we can visit them but about once a year.

*Sanjo*, once a flourishing out-station, has been abandoned for many years. The present providential opening for a new work in *Sanjo* is mentioned elsewhere.

Calling attention to the need of Christian work in another of these towns, a man who was not a Christian published last year the following remarkable advertisement in one of the *Nagaoka* papers:—

*Wanted Christian Teaching.*

"It is a pity that the large town of *Yoita* should have but one resident Christian. If an evangelist will come and hold meetings here I will guarantee him an audience."

In the Annual Report for 1888 we read that Christians in *Ojiya* and *Tochio* were calling for help. They are still calling. In the former place a Presbyterian

family have recently opened their house for meetings when our evangelist from *Nagaoka* visits the place once a month. If our mission could have continued work at *Tochio* thru all these years we might to-day see the people of that city building a house for the worship of God instead of the great *Tenrikyo* temple that they have begun.

*Kutsuzuka* is another place where work was once carried on. Sixteen years ago I visited *Kutsuzuka* and began to speak to a large audience at the hotel, but was stopped by the police because I had not obtained a permit. I have never been there since, but have often wished to go back and finish my talk now that passports and special permits are no longer necessary for preaching the gospel.

We long to break up the fallow ground and sow the seed once more in these fields on which so much labor was bestowed in years gone by. But, to do this, to adequately care for the work in hand and to enter the many waiting fields where no work has been done, we must have more money for touring purposes, more evangelists and Bible-women, and if possible further missionary reinforcements. One of our greatest present needs is for a lady missionary to devote her whole time to work for women and children.

W. L. CURTIS.

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Among those who attend a Bible Class for women at *Nakajo* is the wife of a local physician formerly noted for her ill-temper, at least, her husband says so. He was once violently opposed to Christianity but surprised at the wonderful change in his wife since her conversion his attitude has entirely changed and he is now a regular contributor to the support of the church. The wife finds frequent opportunity for Christian work in speaking to the patients that come for medical treatment, telling them of what Christ has done for her and urging them to attend the church services.



An abundant supply of natural gas has been discovered near Nagaoka. The owner of these gas wells is planning to supply neighboring towns with gas for lighting, heating, and manufacturing purposes, and is even talking of piping it as far as Tokyo. We wish him abundant success in the undertaking.

Altho not a Christian he is becoming deeply interested and his wife too is an earnest enquirer. He recently purchased fifteen Bibles and gave them to his employees with the request that they study them. At Christmas time he told the Christians to put their little chapel into good repair and send the bill to him, and donated five *yen* for their Christmas entertainment. He has intimated to our evangelist at Nagaoka that he will be glad to contribute largely to the fund for a new church-building if his gas enterprise proves a success.

\* \* \* \*

Through the Rev. J. L. Fowle of Cesarea, Turkey, some Armenian Christians of that country have become interested in the evangelization of Japan, and have contributed ten dollars for use in purchasing Bibles for non-Christian Japanese. If those who have opportunity to use such funds will apply to Miss Charlotte DeForest, Kobe College, Yamamoto Dori, 4 chome, Kobe, money will be gladly furnished until the sum is exhausted.

\* \* \* \*

Rev. Mr. Takahashi, a teacher in the Kobe Bible School and until recently pastor of the Akashi church, is planning to give his time to aid pastors where especial evangelistic work has brought many into the church who need instruction, that the impressions made be not transient. In order to help cover his expenses he proposes publishing a monthly magazine of Bible Study. The first copy is to be issued in March. It will sell for five *sen* a copy, or sixty *sen* a year.

Died, February 5th, 1907, at his home in Niigata, Shigeta Kimura, aged 47,—for more than sixteen years a member and for several years a deacon of the Niigata Church.

Mr. Kimura was a skilled carpenter and cabinet-maker, builder of the Mission Houses in Niigata and a contractor for various public works. He was always a good friend to the missionaries,—a man upon whose judgement we could rely and whose experience, technical skill, and inventive genius were invaluable. His death is almost a national loss for as a cabinet-maker he had few equals in the country. His patent folding-rockers and camp-chairs are a feature of the summer homes at Kanizawa and his tables, chairs, and roll-top desks are found in many a missionary's home thru-out Japan.

His finest piece of work, a large octagonal cabinet or book-stand, was exhibited at the World's Fair at Chicago and afterwards brought back to Japan and presented to the Emperor. Its eight panels representing the various stages of rice cultivation were remarkable specimens of word-carving executed by Mr. Kimura's aged father who died several years ago.

### Tottori Items.

The Orphan Asylum took in five new children last month, making a total of twenty-seven. It has not only new inmates, but new obstacles to meet, for the establishment last month at Kurayoshi of a new orphanage, the Impaku Kojiin, under the united patronage of all the Buddhist priests of this part of the country, threatens to draw away some of the supporters of the Christian Orphanage. As a first result of the priests' activity last month, four or five of the contributors to the Tottori Orphanage withdrew their support. But Mr. Saito, in charge of the Orphanage, is of good cheer. He says that the Okayama and the Matsue Orphanages had similar experiences in their early days, and since it is God's work, and not his own, he feels that he can trust for the future.

The new preaching place, barely three months old, has a Sunday School, an evening preaching service, and three Bible classes a week. Bible sales are good, and students from that part of the city have joined the Zion Society and come to the missionaries for religious talks. Hearing the children in that neighborhood shout "Amen" at one on the street is a proof that the preaching-place is making itself known; and moreover such an experience affords an excellent starting-point for explaining to callers the real meaning of the word.

C. B. DEFOREST.

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